

I want to do two things. I want to require dramatic simplification on the part of State and local governments and require the collection of a tax that is owed on the part of remote sellers, and I want to extend the moratorium so that we don't have discriminatory and punitive taxes applied anywhere in the system, with Internet sellers, remote sellers, and so on.

I certainly am someone who works in the Commerce Committee with the Senator from Virginia. I am proud to do that. I believe technology is critically important to our country. It is an accelerator to the growth of our economy. There are a lot of important things that are happening with respect to technology. That is the reason I, too, am interested in extending this moratorium. That is why I offered the consent request last week, why I offer it today, and I will continue to offer it. It is my hope that others will continue to join me in trying to solve the second side of the equation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, this issue is foundational to the formation of our Republic. It is actually similar to what Patrick Henry talked about, taxation without representation. Obviously, the use taxes are to be collected by the States.

This is not a decision to be made by the States. If it were up to the States, obviously, they would be collecting and compelling retailers who do not have a physical presence in their State, who don't vote in their State, who do not receive any fire services, any police services, any services whatsoever from that State. If it were up to the States, for their convenience, they would be requiring them to collect and remit these taxes. This really becomes an issue of convenience for the tax collectors at a locality or at a State.

It is, as Senator DORGAN rightly stated, a decision for Congress to make. It does deal with interstate commerce. However, Congress, in all the decades this has been considered, has never said, before the Internet was even contemplated for use of communications or commerce or education, when people were more concerned about catalog sales, even then Congress said, no, we are not going to burden interstate commerce.

So that is the reason why Congress has never agreed. Now, the States and the localities can simplify. There is a ZIP code reported to me in the Denver, CO, area, that within that same code there are four different sales taxes applied to the very same product. I agree with Senator DORGAN that all of this ought to be simplified. I think if the States on their own, along with their subdivisions—counties, cities, or municipalities—worked to simplify, they will find many, especially the larger retailers that are from out of State, willing to comply as long as it is simplified and there is auditing, which is

logical, and they get a reasonable remittance back for collecting and sending in those sales taxes, as is accorded to most retailers within a State. Then I think you will find it all being handled in that regard.

Again, all of this is separate from the most pressing issue, which is these access taxes and discriminatory taxes which on Senator DORGAN and I would be in absolute agreement; we would not want to see more of them coming on, and there are many in effect now. Indeed, I am researching South Carolina, where the legislature has enacted a moratorium on State sales taxes on charges for Internet access effective from October 1998 through October 2001. Outside of this moratorium period, South Carolina can subject charges for Internet access to the State's sales tax. It may be automatic, by virtue of that law in South Carolina, that such taxes can be imposed even if the legislature may not be meeting. So for the most part I don't suspect many are going to be able to go to public hearings to get them done. But this is how this may be applying in South Carolina, unless the Governor said let's hold off on this and see what happens in Washington.

Mr. DORGAN. If the Senator will yield, I believe the Senator from Virginia raised the question of South Carolina. I am not familiar with that circumstance, but I think the Senator said South Carolina could, in fact, begin collecting. I don't know that he said they would or are collecting. I say this to the Senator. We will, in my judgment, extend the moratorium. When we do that, I will be willing to join him in extending it retroactively until October 22, 2001, to say to State and local governments: Beware, if you are thinking of messing around with public policy and taking advantage of a window when we extend this—and we will, in my judgment—Congress will intend to extend it retroactively to October 22. It is not unprecedented. I would be happy to join the Senator in sending that message if that is the message he would like to send. That resolves the issue he has just discussed.

Mr. ALLEN. I say to the Senator from North Dakota, I join with him. Although we have a contentious issue on some parts, we are in agreement there. I hope that message goes out to States and localities. Just because this has lapsed, please do not rush to tax the Internet access or impose discriminatory taxes.

I yield the floor.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until the hour of 5:15. For a brief explanation, some of the papers the two managers of the bill need are not readily available because of problems with the offices. They are trying to get them now.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, may I reserve 7 minutes out of that time?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I add to that request that Senator KENNEDY be recognized for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

THE IRELAND PEACE PROCESS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, early this afternoon, my friend and colleague, Senator DODD, addressed the Senate about a very significant development that occurred today in the Northern Ireland peace process. I join him and so many others in the Senate, in the House of Representatives, and across the country in welcoming these developments. They are especially welcome at a time when we are still experiencing the dark emotions and feelings from the September 11 terrorist attacks that killed thousands. We have been further disturbed in recent days by the anthrax attacks that have taken the lives of dedicated public servants in this community.

In the midst of these tragic events, I welcome this opportunity to bring to the attention of my colleagues an historic breakthrough in the Northern Ireland peace process that occurred earlier today. This afternoon the IRA issued a statement indicating that it had begun the process of decommissioning its weapons. General de Chastelain, who chairs the international group responsible for overseeing the process, has confirmed that the decommissioning of some weapons has occurred. These actions are unprecedented in scope and are a watershed in the peace process that began a decade ago.

In 1994, after 30 years of violence, the IRA announced a historic cease-fire. That cease-fire led to the discussions, ably led by Senator Mitchell and strongly supported by President Clinton, which culminated in the 1998 Good Friday Peace Agreement. As a part of that visionary Agreement, commitments were made by the British and Irish governments and the political leaders on all sides of Northern Ireland to advance the peace process. Each party to the Agreement made important sacrifices to advance the common good and the process of peace.

The Agreement provided for a power-sharing local government and cross-border institutions. It called for dramatic reform of the police service in Northern Ireland to ensure that it would be representative of both communities. It called for equal treatment and equal opportunity for all in Northern Ireland. It called for a reduction in the presence of British troops and on all paramilitary organizations to decommission their weapons.

This bold and historic action by the IRA to decommission its weapons will

liberate the peace process, advance the cause of peace, and enable the issue of IRA decommissioning to take its rightful place as one of many reforms essential to the full implementation of the Good Friday Peace Agreement and the achievement of lasting peace for Northern Ireland.

Now the Irish and British governments and the political leaders of Northern Ireland must commit to implement all aspects of the Agreement fairly and fully, especially the critical provisions on reductions of the presence of British troops, reform of the police service, and equal treatment and equal opportunity for all of the people of Northern Ireland. Through this action, the IRA has enhanced the prospect for peace.

Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams' public call for the IRA to decommission its weapons was strong and bold, and I commend him for his leadership on this difficult issue at this critical time. This extraordinary breakthrough could never have happened without the skillful and constant leadership of Prime Minister Blair of Great Britain and Prime Minister Ahern of Ireland. I also commend President Bush and his envoy to Northern Ireland, Ambassador Richard Haass, for their skillful assistance in helping to break this extremely serious impasse.

I commend as well the leaders in Ireland, and Great Britain, and the U.S. who, over the years, have contributed so much to the beginnings and continuation of this all important peace process. They all deserve great credit for their vision and leadership in the cause of peace.

I am mindful of the extraordinary role of John Hume, who shared the Nobel Peace Prize with David Trimble. I can remember many years ago meeting John Hume, who at that time was a local political leader and who had exhibited extraordinary political courage.

His life has been one of commitment and dedication to peace. He played an instrumental role in securing the cease-fire. His voice for tolerance and understanding and his call for respect for the two great traditions in the north—the Protestant and Catholic faiths—have been eloquent.

He has recently retired as political leader for his party, the SDLP in Northern Ireland. His contribution to a political resolution of the conflict in Northern Ireland will be forever emblazoned in history.

All who share the goal of peace should welcome the action that has been taken today.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from North Dakota.

FUNDING OF A FARM BILL

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the question of funding a farm bill. A number of the commodity groups have written to leadership suggesting we do not have to worry about moving with expedition to deal with a farm bill this year because, they suggest, they have received a commitment from the administration, and I will quote from the letter:

The administration has provided assurances that the resources necessary to fund a farm bill above the current baseline will be available next year.

I ask unanimous consent that the letter to which I referred be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

OCTOBER 23, 2001.

Senator TOM DASCHLE,
Senate Majority Leader,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR DASCHLE: The following organizations would like to offer our thoughts on the current consideration of the farm bill in the Senate. To date, the debate has reflected the assumption that the additional funding for the bill provided in the FY-2002 Budget Resolution will only be available if the legislation is completed by the end of the First Session of the 107th Congress. This premise has led a number of interested parties to support a process that would limit the amount of time for consideration and development of a farm bill.

The Administration has provided assurances that the resources necessary to fund a farm bill above the current baseline will be available next year. In light of this commitment, we would support the Senate Agriculture Committee continuing a deliberative process with a goal of reaching Senate passage early in the Second Session of the 107th Congress. We believe that a careful and deliberative process will provide an opportunity for all parties involved to fully address the needs and implications of the next farm bill on U.S. agriculture and on consumers at home and around the world.

We believe it is also important to recognize that the attention of the Administration and Congress today is appropriately focused on conducting the war against international terrorism. Rushing the process of developing comprehensive farm legislation at this critical time without full and careful consideration could well result in policies and programs that do not effectively address today's needs.

Based on the Administration's support for a deliberative Committee process and the necessary levels of funding, we urge you to set a goal of finalizing the farm bill by the spring of 2002. We feel this schedule will enable all of us to address the needs of all farmers, ranchers, and other interested parties, and to chart a successful course for agriculture and consumers for years to come.

Sincerely,

American Soybean Association; National Cattlemen's Beef Association; National Corn Growers Association; National Chicken Council; National Pork Producers Council; National Sunflower Association; National Turkey Federation; United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association; U.S. Canola Association.

Mr. CONRAD. That assurance is meaningless. That assurance by the ad-

ministration that the resources are going to be available next year is meaningless. Why is it meaningless? It is meaningless because the administration plays no role in the writing of the budget resolution. That is purely a congressional document. It does not even go to the President. It is considered in the House and in the Senate, and it is conferenced between the House and the Senate and it never goes to the President.

I am the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. I want to alert my colleagues that anyone who believes the same amount of money is going to be available next year as is available this year is absolutely in a dream world.

I understand the Secretary of Agriculture has called Members in the last few days telling them money is not a problem, that she has been assured by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Mr. Daniels, that money is not a problem. Wrong. Money is a problem. Money is going to be a big problem. We have funding in the current year budget to write a new farm bill. We have \$74 billion over the so-called baseline with which to write a new farm bill. Those resources were provided because it was understood without additional resources we could not write an adequate farm bill because the so-called baseline is based on the previous farm bill that has proved to be such a failure. It has been a disaster itself.

If it has not been a disaster, why have we had to write four economic disaster bills in a row to keep our farmers from mass liquidation? That is what would have happened without the disaster assistance bills we have passed in each of the last 4 years.

The administration says—and these farm organizations people who they are supposed to represent send a letter to the leadership saying—the administration has provided assurances the resources necessary to fund a farm bill above the current baseline will be available next year? How much above the baseline? Seventy-four billion dollars above the baseline because that is what is available now.

So they are buying a pig in a poke? They are saying to those of us who represent farmers all across America: You just line up there and you wait and do not worry about it because we are going to have money above the baseline? Really? How do you know? Where is the money coming from?

Is it going to be \$74 billion, or is it going to be \$1 billion above the baseline? The administration would meet its supposed assurance if they provided \$1 billion instead of the \$74 billion that is available in the budget now.

I have never been so disappointed in farm organizations as in the farm organizations that wrote this letter to our leadership telling them do not worry about getting the job done this year because they have gotten assurances that the money is going to be there; that